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APPENDIX VI.

(Vide item 111 on page 11 supra.)

Address by Shri Bisnuram Medhi, Governor of Madras, to the Members of the Madras Legislative Assembly and Council assembled together at the Assembly Chamber, Fort St George, at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, the 4th February 1959.

Deputy Speaker, Chairman, Chief Minister and other colleagues and hon .Members of the Legislature.

It gives me great pleasure to address this Joint Session of the Legislature once again. Many controversial subjects were debated by you during the year just gone by, and some heat was also generated on occasions. But beneath the seeming conflict of political ideologies, I have noted with considerable relief and pleasure an under-current of basic unity towards the common purpose of promoting the welfare of the people of this State. It is this constructive approach which has enabled you to record inside the House and in the various Committees of the Legislature, many agreed decisions on controversial subjects like the Union language, educational policy, panchayat legislation and student-participation in politics, all of which have evoked appreciative comments throughout the country. I hope and pray that you will maintain this spirit of mutual accommodation and tolerance without which democratic institutions cannot hope to succeed.

2. Seasonal conditions are generally fair. Failure of crops has been reported from certain areas in the Tirunelveli, Ramanathapuram and North Arcot districts, and adequate relief will be given wherever necessary. Even though the crop prospects for the year are good, the prices of foodgrains still remain high. The problem is an all-India one and has to be tackled on that basis. The National Development Council which considered this question last November, has recommended that the State should take over the wholesale trade in foodgrains. In pursuance of that policy, which may take time for full implementation, this Government have decided to procure about two lakhs tons of rice through co-operative organizations and other authorised dealers, for distribution in fair-price shops during the lean months. The obvious lesson from this continued shortage of food even in favourable seasons, is that we should redouble our efforts towards stepping up agricultural production.

3. In our approach towards the vexed question of Land Reforms, we should keep in mind this basic requirement of the present situation. We have already passed the necessary legislation for ensuring fixity of tenure and fair rent to the tiller, and the people are gradually getting accustomed to these ameliorative measures. It is the intention of the Government to bring in early legislation imposing a ceiling on land holdings, but some preparatory work

has to precede that measure if its implementation should not affect production. Active steps are therefore being taken now to constitute and strengthen co-operative organizations in the agricultural sector.

4. The execution of the Second Five-Year Plan continues to receive the close attention of the Government. There have been difficulties in respect of internal resources, administrative personnel, building materials and foreign exchange, but by and large, we have been able to surmount them all. Of the investment of Rs. 152 crores envisaged for the five years, we would have spent about Rs. 90 crores by the end of the current year. At the present pace of implementation, we would not only achieve the target set in the Plan in time, but may also hope to exceed it. In the meanwhile the necessary data for framing the Third Five-Year Plan are being gathered. To assist us on this matter, we have requested the National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi, to undertake a techno-economic survey of this State. A team of experts is now engaged on this job and their report may be expected in a few months.

5. The Community Development Programme has now been realigned for implementation in two stages of five years each. Each Development Block will ultimately be covered by a Panchayat Union which will not only take over such of the functions of the District Board as are prescribed in the new Panchayat Legislation but will also guide the development work in the Block.

6. Our Irrigation and Power Programmes are making very satisfactory progress. I am happy to note that a mutually beneficial agreement has been reached with the Kerala Government on the sharing of the water of west-flowing Parambikulam and other streams of the Anamalais. Preliminary works have commenced on the Project estimated to cost about Rs. 30 crores, which is expected to bring under irrigation about 250,000 acres in Coimbatore district, and to generate about 100,000 kilowatts of power. With the inauguration of the Periyar Project last October, the power position in our Grid has improved and there is no likelihood of a power cut during this dry weather. Work on the Kundah Project is progressing satisfactorily and at the present pace the first generator may be commissioned early next year, well in advance of schedule. The rural electrification programme is also going ahead satisfactorily. Power will be extended to about 1,200 villages during the current year, taking the total number of villages electrified to about 8,000. It is the intention of the Government to accelerate this programme further so that power may be available in every village in the State as early as possible.

7. On the industrial side, the Neiveli Lignite Project is progressing according to Plan. Negotiations with the Russian Government for setting up a Thermal Plant of 250,000 kilowatts are nearing completion, and preliminary works have commenced. Tenders for the Fertilizer plant are now under scrutiny, and orders

will be placed immediately. Even though it was once apprehended that owing to the shortage of foreign exchange, the briquetting and carbonizing plant might have to be put off for some time, it has since been decided to start this project also during the current Plan period.

8. The Government have accepted and are implementing all the recommendations of the Legislature Committee on Education. The reorganization of the curricula has already begun in elementary schools, and will commence in high schools from the next academic year. The scheme for the provision of mid-day meal for poor children is receiving wide-spread support from the local people and is now in force in about 11,000 elementary schools covering 3½ lakhs of children. Popular support is also being enlisted under the School Improvement Scheme for providing adequate accommodation, equipment and other facilities necessary for the proper functioning of schools, and the response has so far been heartening. In the field of Technical Education, the Government of India are now giving effect to their decision to locate the Southern Higher Technological Institute at Guindy. The Institution is expected to start functioning from the next academic year.

9. The Government are well aware of the hardships of their Non-gazetted officers arising out of the rising trend in prices. Within the available resources, the Government have been doing their best in recent years to redress some of the grievances. It was their intention to examine the matter again in the light of the Report of the Central Pay Commission which may indicate some way of reducing the glaring disparities in the emoluments of Central and State Government servants doing identical jobs. Inasmuch as this Report is likely to come out soon, the Government have now decided to set up a Commission to scrutinise the present structure of the diverse scales of pay, dearness allowances, other compensatory concessions and retiring benefits of public servants in the State Sector and to recommend a rational structure for the future. This Commission will be requested to take into consideration the financial position of the State Government, the recommendations of the Central Pay Commission and the representations that may be received from the general public and from recognized associations of public servants including employees of local boards and school teachers. Sri K. Ramunni Menon, retired Chief Secretary to the Government, has agreed to be the Chairman of this Commission. Two other Members who are familiar with the service conditions of Government servants, will be nominated to this Commission. Since the Commission may take some time to formulate its proposals, the Government have decided to grant an interim relief of Rs. 5 per mensem, to all their non-gazetted employees. This concession will take effect retrospectively with the salary due to be drawn on 1st January 1959. Local bodies will be assisted to the extent necessary to enable them to extend this concession to all local board employees drawing Rs. 300 and less. This concession will also be extended to teachers in aided schools.

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10. The Legislative proposals for the Session are—

(*a*) A Bill to amend the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, 1951, in the light of the judgments of the Madras High Court and the Supreme Court, and

(*b*) A Bill to revise Chapter XII of the Madras Public Health Act, 1939, and an amendment to section 287 of the Madras City Municipal Act, 1919, to provide for the control and prevention of spread of communicable diseases from catering establishments.

11. The main business of the current Session is the discussion and passing of the Budget for the financial year 1959–60. The Finance Minister in his budget speech will review the progress of the Plan and the financial policies of the Ministry. Let me conclude by expressing the hope that your deliberations will be conducted with the usual forbearance, decorum and thoroughness for which this Legislature is justly renowned. (Cheers.)

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